

PLACE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Monday, 2 September 2024

PRESENT – Councillors, Councillor Ashley Whalley (Chair), Casey, Fielding, Hussain, Ali, Khan and Patel S.

ALSO PRESENT – Tony Watson, Simon Ross, Asad Laher (Observer) and Shima Ahmed.

RESOLUTIONS

1 **Welcome and Apologies**

The Chair welcomed all to the meeting. Apologies were received from Councillors Stephanie Brookfield and Zamir Khan.

2 **Minutes of the last meeting**

It was agreed that ECO and Sustainability be the focus of the third area of scrutiny at the meeting on the 3rd March 2025, whilst there is a lot of work going on in this area the Council does not have a specific strategy.

The Minutes of the last meeting were then agreed as correct record.

3 **Declarations of Interest**

No Declarations of Interest were submitted.

4 **Food Waste Collections**

The Committee received a presentation by Tony Watson, Head of Environment, on the introduction of the food waste collection as part of the Environment Act 2021 which required Local Authorities in England to provide a separate, weekly food waste and recycling service to all households via the 'Simpler Recycling' legislation which became law in May 2024.

The Local Authority has no option but to put in place a Food Waste Strategy.

Food waste amounts to over 40% of the contents of the burgundy bin, with half of that food waste either still in date or edible. The percentage of food waste in the burgundy bin has remained constant at 40% (most other Councils are around 25%).

A food waste survey had been carried out and the Council were looking to get the message across to households via leaflets.

In terms of the Food Waste Strategy, the following key points were highlighted from the presentation:

- By 31st March 2025, non-household municipal premises, including schools, municipal buildings, must implement recycling practices for **all** recyclable waste streams including food waste collections, except garden waste and plastic film.
- Weekly food waste collection service to be introduced by 1st June 2026 at the latest so that it coincides with the cessation of the existing residual waste disposal contract with Suez.
- Funding to be provided by Government. Blackburn with Darwen BC has identified a potential shortfall of £171,279 which would be covered by funding from the Council's Capital Fund if needed.
- A Food Waste report had already been approved by the Council's Executive Board at the beginning of July 2024, regarding the statutory introduction of the service, the procurement of equipment and vehicles, plus funding approval for any shortfall in capital to set up Boroughwide domestic collection service.
- Cost of residual waste and disposal currently at approximately £150 per tonne. Cost of Anaerobic Digestion, current disposal cost at £0. Prices to increase from £0 following greater demand for anaerobic digestion facilities when all Councils seek to have this as a food waste treatment solution.
- Not all residents would be participating as there was no legislation requiring residents to participate. When similar schemes have previously introduced, initially there was an increase in take up which then dropped to a third of residential properties.

Food Waste Collections – Service Delivery

Residents would be provided with a 5/7 litres food waste caddy (can have more than 1 upon request), food waste caddy liners and a large food waste bin (23 litres). Residents would place a food caddy liner (recycled plastic bags) in the food caddy which will ideally be placed in the kitchen. Once the food caddy is full, the caddy liners would be tied by the resident and transferred to the larger food waste bin which has a self-locking lid to stop animals accessing the food waste.

The food waste bin to be placed at the front of the property on collection day (this would be weekly) by the residents. The in-house collection teams would take the food waste bin to the collective vehicle and the content of the food waste bin tipped into the vehicle, with the bin then returned to where it was collected from.

A roll of food caddy liners will be provided free of charge to residents prior to the start of the food waste collection service. Residents can request a new roll of liners when required by simply tying an unused liner around the handle of the food waste bin when leaving the bin out for collection and when the bin is emptied, a new roll of bin liners will be left at the property.

The collection vehicle when full, would transfer the food waste load to a suitable site for either transfer onward or processing. The new food waste anaerobic digestion service will need to be tendered.

Current Issues and Risks

- Recruitment delays as 23 staff will be required for the Boroughwide commencement of the service.
- 6 front line vehicles going down to 5 rounds.
- Blackburn with Darwen BC looking at doing a joint procurement with other Authorities so need to be fast with the equipment orders.
- Multi-occupancy households.
- Lane End collections.
- Ongoing Revenue costs.

Members of the Committee asked a number of questions and made comments on areas highlighted in the presentation, with Tony Watson providing responses. The main points raised being, a place in mind as a potential location site to transfer the food waste load and risk of targets not being met if households were to not participate in the scheme.

In response to the site, this will go out for tendering which will commence in Autumn. Suez will be offering a food waste collection service for businesses which will commence in 2025.

The Council has leeway to flex the existing contract with Suez who will have an outlet for food waste before the end of the current residual waste contract with Suez for June 2026.

With regards to the food waste recycling targets not being met, it is hoped that the Government would re-adjust any future targets pending the opt in process for food waste collections by residents.

The Head of Environment was thanked for the presentation.

Signed:

Date:

Chair of the meeting
at which the minutes were confirmed